

Excursus On The Atonement

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APPENDIX D.

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In point of intrinsic importance the atonement ranks among the most fundamental doctrines of the Christian system. This intrinsic importance is still heightened by modern discussions and theories which bear forcibly, not to say vitally, upon its substantial significance, and also upon its practical moral power. No apology therefore need be made for an extended discussion of this doctrine as taught in the scriptures.

Fully aware that much of the controversy on this subject is logomachy, a mere war of words, fostered if not caused by vagueness and diversity in the use of terms, I begin with definitions. I use the word atonement to signify, the provision made of God through the sufferings and death of Christ to render the pardon of penitent sinners morally safe and also wise under his moral government. A secondary aim in this scheme is to promote the repentance of sinners and their subsequent obedience.--I do not (with some) use the word in the sense of at-one-ment--a reconciliation between God and sinners, effected simply by their repentance. As I use the word "atonement," it lies back of this reconciliation, as a provision antecedent, contemplating the exigencies of God's moral government, and providing for the honor and support of law in the case of pardon.

"Pardon" in this discussion will mean the same as forgiveness, and essentially the same as justification, inasmuch as to those who are pardoned in Christ "there is no more condemnation."--Guilt (with me) is ill-desert, blame-worthiness, and is not strictly identical with being held under law to punishment. So used, forgiveness does not extinguish guilt. The ill-desert of sin is intrinsic and therefore eternal. No mercy, no pardon, can make sin less blameworthy.

Points antecedent to atonement.

Hoping thus to make my argument more surely and fully understood, I first call special attention to some antecedent facts and considerations bearing upon the nature and necessity of the atonement. If some of these points should seem in themselves too obvious to need mention, yet in their bearings on our subject they may be too vital to be left out.

1. The atonement contemplates a sinning race; is made for sinners, and not the unsinning. Remotely as revealing God, it may affect unsinning races; but directly, its provisions are only for sinners.

2. It presupposes a moral law, enjoined by God and broken by men; for, sin is nothing more or less than the transgression of such moral law. Hence the atonement, having to do with sin and its forgiveness, must have to do with this broken law, and consequently must have governmental bearings and relations. It could be nothing if there were no moral government of God, and therefore it must be, in a thoroughly vital sense, a governmental scheme. The objection sometimes brought against recognizing any governmental idea or element in the scheme of atonement is, therefore, baseless, because it rests on a total misconception of things entirely fundamental to the atonement.

3. Moral beings (like man), made for responsible moral action, have, in their very nature and relations to God, unmeasured capabilities for self-wrought blessedness or self-wrought ruin. Coupling together such innate moral powers with such relations to their infinite Maker and Lord, they must inevitably work out an eternal destiny of either bliss or woe.--Now God has assumed the immense responsibility of giving existence to such beings. This carries with it the responsibility of doing the utmost he wisely can to promote their right-doing and its resulting blessedness; to shield them against temptations to wrongdoing; to reclaim the fallen ones if, safely and wisely, he can; and in general to govern all moral races for the interests of each, and each in the interests of all.

These facts and considerations set forth the functions of moral law--its place and work in a system of moral government. God could by no means do justice to himself if he should fail to enact, impose and sustain a moral law over his intelligent moral subjects. Their well-being is so thoroughly in his keeping, his responsibilities for it are so great, that he is morally bound to make known to them the path to life, and to press them

with the highest possibly motive to right-doing and its consequent blessedness.--For this end it is requisite that he not only reveal to them a perfect law, but that he sustain and enforce it with the most impressive sanctions. The force of its sanctions is the measure of its potency and of its wisdom. Law without sanctions is not law at all. It would be at the utmost only advice. Considering the responsibilities God has assumed in giving existence to moral agents, and the momentous issues involved in their right action, his intelligent children could scarcely respect him if he had given them only advice. Issues so fearful, so momentous, demand the strongest expressions of his will and his utmost influence. He therefore holds himself sacredly bound to give his law the moral force of infinite sanctions.

At this point the question arises: Is it both wise and kind in the Supreme Ruler to make the penalties of his law so severe? Many men do ask: Why should He depend so much on threatened suffering rather than on promised reward?

Let us meet this question. Consider that both human law and divine have to deal with the same depraved human nature. What is wise, therefore, in human law should be presumed to be not less so in the divine.--As to human law, the great Blackstone puts most common sense into fewest words in this way: "Human legislators have for the most part chosen to make the sanctions of their laws rather vindictory than remunerative; i.e., to consist rather in punishments than in rewards" . . . "because the dread of evil is a much more forcible principle of human action than the prospect of good." "of all the parts of a law, the most effectual is the vindictory." For it is but lost labor to say, "do this," or "avoid that," unless we also declare: "This shall be the consequence of your non-compliance." "Rewards in their nature can only persuade and allure; nothing is compulsory but punishment."

Blackstone's doctrine might be fortified by this well-known law of moral natures: that sin is itself fearfully depraving. It perpetually works toward worse depravity, weakening the power of reason and conscience, intensifying the power of passion and lust. As men descend into this realm of deeper depravity, they become sadly obtuse to rewards. The sensibility to suffering remains almost the only point of effective appeal for law, human or divine.

This, it will be seen, involves not only the amount and force of penalty, but also the exercise of pardon. Human experience proves that the pardoning power may be so used as to break down the moral influence of law and penalty. It is thus proved before our eyes that a sense of certainty as to the execution of penalty is vital to its moral force. It would be idle for us to assume that God does not know this as well as we do--know it be true of divine law as we do of human--and see the wisdom of providing against this possible weakness in the administration of law.--It must be assumed, therefore, that God can not deal lightly with the question of pardon. We can conceive of no question more critical than this in its bearings upon law and penalty. This is one standpoint of view from which to study the atonement if we would comprehend its nature and necessity.

It can not be amiss to say somewhat more distinctly that the bearings and issues of God's moral government over our world reach out into other worlds; onward to the final judgment; and beyond that into the eternal future of his universal kingdom. God's government of the moral universe is a unit, with no isolated parts, with no movements in any one sphere or world which shall never send forth their influences beyond "their original home." "We are a spectacle to angels," and are yet to be still more, at and after the final judgment. Consequently, the entire administration of God's law, including both penalty and pardon--the whole kingdom of grace--every thing involved in the salvation of sinners under the gospel--must be exemplary, i.e., freighted with moral lessons for the entire intelligent universe. Who, then, can adequately measure the vital issues of the great question of atonement? Who can appreciate the extreme delicacy of the provisions that contemplate the safe pardon of sin, and consequently involve the majesty and sustained moral power of law?

At this point it would be unpardonable not to call attention to a style of sentiment that seems to be growing upon our age, which disparages law and especially its penalty, and which, in its developed stage, seems scarcely willing to forgive the Almighty for having enacted any moral law at all. The doctrine, pushed forward more or less boldly, is that love is over against law--a vitally different principle, far more worthy of God; and, as is claimed, less repulsive to sinners and better adapted to reach their hearts. It would, in their view, be easy for one who is Almighty to manage his creatures, even the fallen, by the might of his love, if He could only

persuade himself to omit the rigors of law and penalty! By such a course, He would (say they) exonerate himself from all suspicion of tyranny and severity, and undue regard to his own good, and an under-valuation of the good of his creatures.

This sentiment is wont to manifest itself in disrespect for the Old Testament as not worthy to be compared with the New, the Old belonging to the reign of law; the New to the reign of love. At best it seems to them a mistake--a case of unwisdom (if indeed the Old Testament be from God at all)--that he should think it necessary or wise or kind to treat his creatures to such a dispensation of law and exemplary retribution.

For every reason this style of sentiment deserves unqualified reprobation. It is utterly false in its assumptions, vicious in its principles, abusive to God, ruinous to sinful men. It misconceives both love and law; puts them in an unreal antagonism; and reasons on this whole subject as reckless outlaws reason against the best human governments. For, wholesome law and effective penalty are among the very highest manifestations of real love--of love in its only legitimate sense--a wise and benevolent regard for the best interests of sentient moral beings. Sin being what it is, a strong government is no mistake, no blunder; and never need to apologize for its own existence. It is simply amazing that men, otherwise sensible, should disparage, not to say traduce, God's law and its penalty, and yet seem not aware that they reason on principles which would ruin any human government.

All these considerations are in place to show that since moral agency involves the liability to sin, it involves also the natural necessity for law and penalty. They serve consequently to show that pardon, if ever granted, must not expose the Lawgiver to any misapprehension as to his hatred of sin, and his inflexible purpose to restrain it to the utmost of his power.

Two great historic facts in God's administration of his moral realm bear with force upon the points now in hand, viz.:

1. That the first falling race met their natural doom under law and its penalty. No scheme of atonement was ventured upon in their case, and no pardon was offered. As to them the revealed testimony runs: "The angels who kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, he hath reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the

great day" (Jude 6); "If God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell and delivered them into chains of darkness to be reserved unto judgment;" "The Lord knoweth how to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished" (2 Peter 2:4,9). This record has not a whisper of mercy, not a hint of any atonement providing for the safe exercise of pardon. It is therefore legitimate for us to infer that God provided no atonement for them and offered no pardon, because he saw it to be morally impracticable, that is to say, unsafe, unwise, and therefore not to be attempted. For surely no other reason for passing by falling angels without an atonement is even supposable. God was no less benevolent then than now; was as kindly and even mercifully disposed toward fallen angels as toward fallen men; so that no reason can be assigned for the fact of no mercy, no atonement, no offered pardon in their case, except that he foresaw it would lie dangerously open to abuse--saw therefore the necessity of first making an unmistakable demonstration of his eternal abhorrence of sin before he could wisely venture upon a scheme for pardon.

2. A second analogous fact our own world presents in the long ages of delay ere the Son of God became incarnate-- ages of delay largely filled with demonstrations of God's justice in such scenes as the flood; the destruction of Sodom; retributions upon wicked nations. Thus four thousand years were filled with retributions upon the guilty, all manifestly designed to evince that God is just and knows how to punish transgression.--My argument need not assume an age of pure and perfect retribution. It suffices that the full manifestation of mercy through the incarnation was long delayed, to give scope for revelations of his justice. It was not until "the fullness of time" that Jesus became incarnate, and the scheme of redemption was fully unfolded. This "fullness of time" was not a question of chronology, but was a question of moral government and its exigencies in a moral world. The waiting was not that a certain number of centuries--so many and no more--might first elapse. It was rather that certain manifestations of justice and retribution might first be made, and might work their legitimate results, so that mercy and pardon might be more safe and less liable to abuse. This long delay before the full revelation of mercy in Christ--this delay so manifestly utilized for revelations of God's justice, we must interpret as witnessing to his sense of delicacy, not to say the peril, of revealing his mercy until he had first revealed his justice, and evinced (so far as a world of probation

should allow it) his sacred regard for his law.

As to the nature of the atonement, three distinct theories invite attention. Having named them, I propose to adduce the scriptural testimony upon the subject, and then apply it to these several theories.

I. The first theory takes the word "atonement" in the sense of at-one-ment, makes it essentially synonymous with reconciliation, and locates its virtue in the manifestation it makes of the sympathy of God for sinful men. Jesus bore these sins of men in the sense of taking their sinful, wretched state upon his heart, and so bearing its burden. Manifested love subdues rebellious men; reconciliation to God is the result.

II. A second theory assumes that the sufferings and death of Christ were strictly substitutional--an exact and full substitute for the sufferings and death of sinners, he having suffered in their stead the fully penalty of the law they had broken. The standard phrase which defines this theory is: "Christ suffered the penalty of the law for sinners," and not some substitute for that penalty.

III. A third theory is that Christ's sufferings and death were in fact vicarious, inasmuch as they obviate the moral necessity for the eternal death of sinners (they being penitent and believing), and thus take the place of their death.--Negatively, the theory does not account those sufferings to have been in their nature penal in the sense of punishment for sin, and by no means supposes them to have been the same in kind or in degree which the redeemed must else have suffered.

Under this theory, Christ's sufferings and death on the one hand honored the divine law by powerfully suggesting and indorsing its righteous penalty, and on the other by signally illustrating the spirit of self-sacrificing obedience; in both directions giving the law such moral support as made it safe and wise to pardon the penitent and believing, and to give the Holy Sufferer myriad's of redeemed souls as his reward.

These three theories may be defined and distinguished by the views they severally take: (a) Of the nature of Christ's sufferings; (b) Of the moral attitude of the Father toward his dying Son.

1. As to the nature of Christ's sufferings: The first theory holds them to be those of sympathy--having regard to the sinner's ruin rather than his guilt, and taking his lostness upon the heart to bear it in the tenderness of

divine compassion.

The second supposes those sufferings to be precisely penal--the very penalty threatened against the sinner in God's law.

The third regards them as pertaining to his human nature rather than his divine, as in some points deeply mysterious to us, but manifestly aggravated exceedingly by a sense of fearful darkness and desolation, of bearing his agonies alone, and of being in some sense forsaken of God, and all this coupled with the utmost assaults of satanic power.

(b) Placing these theories side by side to be distinguished from each other by their respective conceptions of the moral attitude of the Father toward his dying Son,--

The first assumes his attitude to that of profoundest sympathy and favor.

In so far as the second theory rests on the assumption that the ethical nature of God demands that Christ should suffer the full penalty of the law, there is no reason apparent why the execution of this penalty must not assume the same moral attitude in the Father toward his suffering Son as toward the sinners for whom he suffered.

As to the third: it is plain from the scriptures that the death of Jesus under the severest sufferings was definitely in the plan and purpose of God; that he was delivered up of God to this death (Acts 2:23 and Rom. 8:32); and left at least temporarily to a sense of being forsaken of God. While on the one hand it can not be doubted that the Father approved the obedient, benevolent, self-sacrificing spirit of his dying Son; on the other, it would seem from the facts that tokens of such approbation were for the time withheld, so that the sense of desolation, the unutterable agony of being consciously forsaken of God, intensified his sufferings beyond what we can possibly conceive, and made his death a real and great sacrifice for the sins of men.

These theories show that very diverse opinions have been held in regard to the essential nature of the atonement, and the relation of the Father to his suffering Son.

Our great inquiry is to be--What is truth? What have the scriptures taught on this great subject? And which of these theories is best sustained by its teachings?

The scriptures present their testimony on this subject in historical order. Consequently our method should be the historic, following the successive steps by which God has unfolded the subject to our race, thus:

I. The Pre-Mosaic testimony--that which appears before the time of Moses;

II. The Mosaic testimony--appearing during his life, mainly in the institutions established by divine direction through his agency;

III. The testimony of Messianic prophecy;

IV. The testimony which appears in the New Testament; comprising,

1. The sacrificial terms and phrases brought forward from the Old Testament;

(a) Those used by Jesus of himself;

(b) Those used by John the Baptist of Jesus;

(c) Those used by Peter;

(d) Those by the apostle John;

(e) Those by Paul;

(f) Those by the writer to the Hebrews.

2. The collateral testimony coming in from the history of Christ's sufferings which will include: (1) His definite and strong anticipation of a violent death; (2) His utterances revealing a sense of struggle, straitness in anticipation of his sufferings; (3) His sense of their imperative necessity as a most important and vital part of his appointed work; (4) Intimations of the terrible presence and power of Satan upon him; (5) The great agony of Gethsemane; (6) The one utterance which indicates a sense of being forsaken of God.

When the points of this testimony are before us, we shall be prepared to weigh their bearings upon the several theories above defined. We now turn to the testimony.

I. In the age before Moses.

Let it be borne in mind that all real knowledge as to the atonement must

come from God. Otherwise than from him we never could know that in his view mercy for lost men under his government is possible. Much less could it be known what antecedent provision would be requisite to make its exercise safe. What this provision should consist in; how it should be made; what must be the successive steps of its development before the hierarchies of heaven and before the eyes of men; e. g., that it should involve the incarnation of the Son of God in human flesh; the manifestation of God's pity and love through his example, his teachings, his final sufferings and death.--How can it be possible that human ingenuity should evolve this scheme, or that it should ever become known to man save through inspiration from God?

So far as we can learn from the scriptures, the first clear intimations of divine mercy for our race, and of provisions for it by means of an atonement, came in connection with animal sacrifices.

Here will open before us two lines of inquiry: (a) The points of natural fitness in animals of purposes of illustration; (b) The historical facts showing that this was the starting point in God's revelation of an atonement.

(a) Natural fitness appears in these points, viz., the natural penalty for the violation of law is inflicted suffering; not merely the suffering that follows sinning by natural consequence, and leaves the thought and hand of the lawgiver out of sight and wholly in doubt; but such inflicted suffering as testifies to the lawgiver's displeasure and to his purpose to punish transgression.--Extreme penalties call for extreme suffering, of which blood and death are natural symbols.

Now animal sacrifices are merely symbols, types--this, and nothing else. Their only value lies in their suggestive power. They are good, not for what is in and of themselves, but for what they suggest as to something else. Their blood and death did not itself atone, but it did suggest--indeed, was doubly suggestive; (1) That the offerer was a sinner and ought himself to die; (2) That "mercy ruled the hour," sparing the sinner and providing a lamb of sacrifice to die in his stead. Thus this doubly significant blood and death spake to the offerer first of his sin; secondly, of his salvation. First, its suggestions enforced conviction; secondly, they inspired hope and ministered to faith and love.--To direct this suggestive thought and also to heighten its power, human hands were solemnly laid

upon the victim's head and sins confessed--signifying that the offerer is a consciously guilty sinner, and that the victim is to take his place and die in his stead. We can think of no other method of impressing these moral convictions at once so simple, so unmistakable, and so impressive.--It admits of being heightened by the selection of animals which embody our highest ideal of innocence and purity. Still other elements come in if they are our property, and if they are objects of special attachment. The shepherd's tender lambs were, in endearment, next to his children. Must he give them up in sacrifice, look upon their dying agonies, and receive upon himself their sprinkled blood as a symbol of something analogous that atones for his sin? The scenes are full of significance, and every way adapted to pungent and instructive impression.--Instructive, do we say, and making truthful impressions? Doubtless; and it aids us to meet the question often arising: Is it even supposable that God can find any pleasure in the shedding of innocent blood, and that He would shape religious institutions to bring such revolting scenes, day after day, for long ages, before the eyes and into the sensibilities of his covenant people who are under his moral training unto purity and righteousness?

No other answer can be given to these questions than this: No pleasure in the suffering itself; no pleasure in any suffering for its own sake; no pleasure at all except that which righteous and paternal government finds in the support of law and in wholesome moral impression upon dangerously tempted subjects. To charge cruelty against the necessary execution of righteous penalty upon law-breakers is simply horrible! Such execution is one of the highest, noblest manifestations of faithful love.-- On this ground we justify the Infinite Lawgiver for enacting daily scenes of blood and death before the eyes of sinful men, to signify that rebellion against his righteous government is a fearful crime--"that abominable thing which he hates."-- That animals most suggestive of innocence and purity should be devoted in these sacrifices only indicates that they die, not for their own sins but for another's--the idea of vicarious suffering being thus entirely fundamental in the scheme.

(b) We are to note the historical facts showing that the earliest revelations of mercy came from God to man in connection with the requirement of animal sacrifices. the first recorded case of animal sacrifices is that by Abel. What (if any thing) had been revealed to Adam previously, we can not know. But it is quite obvious that the postponement of any definite

intimation in scripture as to sacrifice until there were two brothers of age to present their respective offerings side by side furnished an opportunity to put two sorts of offering in comparison (not to say contrast) with each other, and thus in the very outset give prominence to the most distinctive ideas of sacrifice, as we shall see.--The record is in few words, but words full of significance and very plain (be it considered) to the Hebrew readers of Moses: "Cain brought of the fruit of the ground and offering unto the Lord. And Abel, he also brought of the firstlings of his flock, and of the fat thereof. And the Lord had respect unto Abel and to his offering; but unto Cain and to his offering he had not respect" (Gen. 4:3-5). the writer to the Hebrews (Heb. 11:4) adds yet another historic fact in the words: "By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts."

In the case of Abel's offering, the allusion to "the fat of them" shows that it involved the sacrifice of the firstlings of his flock upon the altar. It was a bloody sacrifice. That of Cain was not. His was bloodless. It may have indicated thanksgiving to God, a recognition of God as the Giver of his corn and wine; but had no confession of sin, and no recognition of sacrifice for sin. God accepted the bloody sacrifice of Abel; He did not accept the bloodless offering of Cain. This served to put in the clearest light the really vital point in offerings made to God.--The further statement (Heb. 11:4) serves both to illustrate and to confirm. It sets forth that Abel's faith made his offering acceptable to God, and implies that Cain's lack of faith was the ground of his rejection.--Of this faith of Abel we may say that at the very least it must mean that Abel believed God's word requiring sacrifice and specifying (we must suppose) what it should be. His sacrifice was an act of obedience to God-- the obedience of faith-- and for this reason was acceptable. This view is intrinsically reasonable. Nothing is pleasing to God save obedience; nothing displeasing, morally, save disobedience. Besides, an act in itself so cruel, so revolting, as the shedding of innocent blood--the blood of the most gentle, harmless, of all the lower animals--could by no means be acceptable to God unless for some very special reason. Such a reason we find in the supposition of its being a symbol of atoning sacrifice for sin, and we find it nowhere else. Apart from this theory, it is simply and utterly incredible that God could find pleasure in the slaughter of innocent lambs.--Thus we reach the conclusion that Abel's faith involved obedience to God in the offering of a

bloody sacrifice which God required. So much at the very least. At the most, in the deeper sense of faith, it may perhaps have been the fully developed faith of the gospel, at least so far forth as to include God's providing for himself a Lamb for sacrifice, upon whom the sinner may trust for the actual pardon of sin and for acceptance before God. We need not deem it impossible that God should have signified to him that his lamb was only a type, foreshadowing the better Lamb for sacrifice yet to come, and that Abel's faith rested there.

Here, then, in the very family of Adam, we take our first historic lesson as to mercy offered to lost men and an atonement for its provision antecedent. We learn that the elementary idea of acceptable offering is not gratitude for favors, but is a propitiatory sacrifice; is not any form of unbloody offering; but is a bloody offering, significant of the sacrifice of life as the antecedent provision for the safe pardon of sin.

II. The revelations as to the atonement, made through Moses, take the form, mostly, of established institutions. Of these the earliest in time was the Passover, of which the central element was the paschal lamb, one for each household, solemnly slain in sacrifice, and its blood being made to signify most impressively that the angel of death passed over that household when, on his dread mission, he smote every first-born in all the houses of Egypt. Here was the blood of an innocent lamb, made essentially vicarious as to those upon whose doors it was sprinkled, inasmuch as the life-blood of this lamb took the place of the life of their first-born, otherwise to be slain, and singled them out for mercy as compared with Egypt's first-born, sheltered under no symbol of sprinkled blood.--The purposed significance and fitness of this illustrative scene were too precious to be lost. The historic scene itself must not be suffered to die out of the mind of Israel. To utilize it to the utmost, it was ordained that it be reproduced with all its original accompaniments every year on the memorable fourteenth day of the first month. Thus year after year, through all the history of the covenant people, this Passover scene was kept before their mind and fresh upon their heart, until the Lord's great Lamb of sacrifice appeared to take away sin by his own blood. That inspired men of the New Testament age saw Christ foreshadowed in this paschal lamb is shown in the words of Paul (1 Cor. 5:7): "For even Christ, our Paschal Lamb (Greek) is sacrificed for us."

After Sinai, a large and various group of sacrifices and offerings were

specifically described and enjoined; some not bloody, but the greater part bloody; some fixed as to time; others contingent upon special circumstances as they might occur. My present purpose does not call for an exhaustive analysis and description of these offerings and sacrifices. Let it suffice to say that the so-called "whole burnt-offering" was not specially expiatory in the sense of signifying atonement for sin; but rather signified entire consecration to God, and was to be in its spirit joyful (not to say jubilant) rather than penitential, and accompanied with confession of sin. After the service of song, developed under David, had adjusted itself to the Mosaic ritual institutions, we find in the history of Hezekiah's great passover (2 Chron. 29:27,28) that when "the burnt-offering began, the song of the Lord began also, with the trumpets and the instruments ordained by David. And all the congregation worshipped, and the singers sang, and the trumpeters sounded; and all this continued until the burnt-offering was finished." "And they sang praises with gladness." "And Hezekiah said, Now have ye consecrated yourselves unto the Lord; come near and bring sacrifices and thank-offerings into the house of the Lord; and as many as were of free heart brought in burnt-offerings."--In striking antithesis to this spirit of joyous and grateful song stood the spirit required in the services of "the great day of atonement." In the latter it was solemnly enjoined: "Ye shall afflict your souls," i.e., with fasting; and "Aaron shall lay both his hands upon the head of the live goat and confess over him all the iniquities of the children of Israel," etc. (Lev. 16:29,30,31).--Paul struck the key-note of the burnt-offering in the words (Rom. 12:1): "I beseech you, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service."--Moreover it indicates special and just discrimination that (unlike the sin-offerings and those of the great day of atonement) this is never said to "make atonement for the sins" of the offerer.

The services most distinctively propitiatory were the sin and trespass offerings, and those of "the great day of atonement."

It will be seen in Lev. (chapters 4-7) that the sin and trespass-offerings applied to sins of ignorance and inadvertence in the ritual service; also to moral offenses of which the offender subsequently became convicted and penitent. Then, under this law, the offerer having brought the required animal sacrifice, laid his hands upon the head of the animal and himself killed it; after which, the priest sprinkled the blood, and so (as is

said emphatically) "the priest shall make an atonement for them, and it shall be forgiven them."--But over against this atonement, it was distinctly declared: "The soul that doeth aught presumptuously, the same reproacheth the Lord; and that soul shall be cut off from among his people. Because he hath despised the word of the Lord and hath broken his commandment, that soul shall be utterly cut off; his iniquity shall be upon him (Num. 15:30,31). (See also Deut. 17:12,13). The reader should notice that this is constantly affirmed to be a sacrifice which made atonement for sin, that it was to be accompanied with an open confession of sin for which expiation was to be made: also that the sinner, laying his hand upon the head of the victim, symbolically transferred his own sins to that animal; that in the result, his sins were forgiven him; and finally, that there were certain sins, viz., those "committed presumptuously," involving contempt of God's authority and the very spirit of rebellion, which could not be forgiven; and for these, no sacrifices might be offered, and no atonement indicated. "His iniquity shall be upon him;" "that soul shall be utterly cut off" (Num. 15:31); "that man shall die" (Deut. 17:12).--Yet further, it should be distinctly noticed that while in the case of burnt-offerings and also the thank-offerings, no limit was set to the number of animal victims; on the contrary, for the sin-offering never but one was slain--as if it was made purposely significant of the great gospel fact that by the one offering of God's own Son, he should perfect forever them for whose sins he made expiation.

The significance of the Mosaic system, in reference to expiation for sin and essential atonement, culminated in what is known as "the great day of atonement"--the tenth of the seventh month. Of this day and its services the salient points were, stringent fasting of the whole people for the entire day, on pain of death; the high priest entering alone into the Most Holy place before the very mercy-seat, on this day only of all the year; the first time bearing with him both burning incense and the blood of the bullock offered for his own sins, and sprinkling it upon the mercy-seat. Then of two goats, one is chosen by lot, slain for a sin-offering for all the people, and its blood in like manner borne by the high priest into the Most Holy place; and then upon the head of the other goat, the high priest, in behalf of the people, "laid both his hands and confessed over him all the iniquities of Israel, and all their transgressions in all their sins, putting them upon the head of the goat, and then sent him away by the hand of a fit man into the wilderness," and "the goat shall bear upon him all their

iniquities into a land not inhabited." Thus in these two goats the symbol of taking away sins was duplicated, the first being slain and its blood sprinkled before the Lord in manner not unlike the usual sin-offering, save the great solemnity and more impressive significance of bearing this blood into the most sacred holy of holies, and sprinkling it upon the very mercy-seat; but in case of the second, the sins of the whole people were solemnly confessed and symbolically transferred to the animal, and then he was led far away into the desert wilderness to return no more. Thus he was made in symbol to bear the sins of the people and take them away, to be remembered no more as lying upon their own souls, and before the God they worshipped.

The word "atonement," the central, pivotal word in the sacrificial system, should be carefully studied. It does not (as some are understood to hold) signify primarily at-one-ment, the reconciliation of God to the sinner, and of the sinner to God; but its primary sense is a covering, a hiding from view, from a word signifying to cover [kauphar]. Its essential idea is that which every troubled conscience so intensely craves--the hiding of its conscious guilt from the awful eye of God. It is one of several expressions used for the same essential idea--the forgiving and blotting out of sin; God's "passing by transgressions;" "retaining not his anger forever, because he delighteth in mercy;" "remembering their sins no more;" "casting all their sins into the depths of the sea." It will be seen that this idea is but reiterated under new forms when, in the sin-offering, the priest "makes atonement for the sins of the offender, and it shall be forgiven him" (Lev. 4:20,26,35 and Num. 15:25,28), or when he lays his hand upon the head of the scape-goat, and confesses the sins of the whole people, and then causes him to be driven with all his sin-burden away into the unknown wilderness.--Thus the atonement illustrated in this sacrificial system had for its central idea the pardon of sin and the taking it away, to be remembered no more. On these points the statements are too decisive to admit of doubt; the numerous illustrations are too clear, too significant in character, to be misapprehended. If this be not their meaning, they are fearfully misleading. No other plausible significance ever has been suggested, or ever can be.

III. The atonement as shown in Old Testament Prophecy.

Omitting certain brief allusions to a suffering Messiah in Dan. 9:24-27 and in Ps. 16 and 22 and 40; it will suffice to bring under consideration Isa.

53. Nothing more full than this appears or need appear within the whole range of Old Testament prophecy.

The brevity of this essay must excuse me from digressing to prove that this chapter refers to the nation's promised Messiah.

Assuming this, the prophecy represents that as first seen on the earth, his visage was marred, worn and wasted; himself was despised and rejected of men; he seemed as one outcast from God as well as from men. But a closer and better view startled them with the discovery that he was bearing others' sins and not his own; that he was bruised for others' iniquities, himself altogether sinless toward both God and man. Reproached and slandered, he bore all meekly; led as a lamb to the slaughter, not a whisper of complaint escaped his lips. Most surprising of all, the prophet sees that in some sense "it pleased the Lord to bruise him," and that "the Lord laid on him the iniquity of us all." These sufferings culminate in death; he is cut off out of the land of the living; his soul (life itself) is made an offering for sin.--But glorious to behold! out of his death of scorn and agony, come fruits of magnificent reward; the knowledge of him avails to justify man because he has borne their iniquities. He sees of the travail of his soul, and is satisfied. He shares the spoils of this great battle-field of time with his mighty adversary, and comes off more than conqueror; the salvation of a great multitude that no man can number is his everlasting glory!

Bearing upon the nature of the atonement, the great points made in this prophecy are:

(a) The emphatic prominence given to the vicarious element, it being reiterated over and over--"was wounded for our transgressions;" "bruised for our iniquities;" "the chastisement that brought peace to us fell on him;" "the stripes on him were to us healing;" "the Lord laid on him the iniquity of us all;" "for the transgression of my people was he stricken;" "he justifies many because he bears their iniquities;" "he bare the sins of many." To rule out from these phrases the idea of vicarious suffering and sacrifice is to wrench out of them their whole significance. Nothing short of the utmost violence and unreason can achieve such a result. The words mean this, or they mean nothing.--Besides, let it be carefully considered, the prophet himself and his first readers for whom he adapted his words and phrases, were Israelites, with a life-long training

under the Mosaic institutions of sacrifice. Every day of their lives they had seen innocent lambs borne to the slaughter, meek and uncomplaining--the uplifted knife drawing their blood, and that blood sprinkled upon the people and upon God's holy altar, because they were made to bear the sins of the people. In the presence of these bloody sacrifices it is simply impossible that Isaiah or his readers could have thought of any thing else in this language except an analogous sacrifice of their nation's Messiah. It is simply amazing, and on any rational ground unaccountable, that professed interpreters of scripture should find some other sense here and not this.

(b) A second point, deserving special notice, is the allusion to "the pleasure of the Lord" in these sufferings: "It pleased the Lord to bruise him."--Old Testament usage in speaking of God's agency authorizes us to take this as simply permissive--done by others and not directly by himself. But so much as this the words must mean: God was pleased to permit this bruising.--Yet there is not the least occasion to suppose that this pleasure was vindictive, or that it implied in the slightest degree any pleasure in the suffering for its own sake, or the least lack of love for his suffering Son. All such notions are ruled out at once both by the known character of God, and by the explanatory clause subjoined here, viz.: "The pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hands." This shows that God's pleasure in the suffering turned on the results. Here were results that nothing less, nothing else, could secure. Under his violated law a sinning race was justly doomed to perdition. Some expression must needs go forth to sustain the sacredness and majesty of that law, so that pardon could be offered and given with no peril to his moral kingdom. Hence results of unsurpassed worth and glory made the sacrifice on Calvary tolerable, not to say a pleasure, to the Infinite Father. As we shall see, and as we might expect, the New Testament writers and speakers, including Jesus himself, take up these terms and phrases and use them continually, and even exclusively, to express the great facts of Christ's atoning death.

IV. We come now to the testimony which appears in the New Testament. I will adduce in their order the testimony of Jesus; of John the Baptist; of Peter; of John the apostle; of Paul, and of the writer to the Hebrews.

(a) Of Jesus. His testimony comes naturally under two heads, viz.: (1) What he said of the objects and results of his death: (2) What he said and

manifested in immediate anticipation of his own death and under the suffering itself. The latter will come up for special consideration hereafter; the former is in place here.

Note, then, that Jesus evinced the deepest sense of the absolute necessity of his death, and that it must be in manner and purpose as indicated "in the law, the prophets, and the Psalms" (Luke 24:25-27, 44-47). "Oh, slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken. Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory? And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself." The same views were in substance repeated to the whole body of the disciples (in vs. 44-47)--the imperative necessity that Christ should suffer, so that repentance and remission of sins might be preached in his name, and that all should be done as had had been written in the Scriptures. This (it will be seen) thoroughly indorses the Old Testament teachings as to the purposes, the objects and the results of his sufferings and death.

The earliest announcement to his disciples of his sufferings and death we find (Matt. 20:28 and Mark 10:45) the words: "The Son of man came to give his life a ransom for many." The central word ransom (lutron) means that which is paid for another, which buys him off, redeems. We have nearly the same Greek word and in the same sense in 1 Tim. 2:6: "Who gave himself a ransom for all" [antilutron]; also a kindred noun in Luke 2:38: "Waiting for redemption" [lutrosis] "in Jerusalem." The analogous verb appears often; e. g., "Ye are redeemed with the precious blood of Christ as of a Lamb," etc., (1 Peter 1:18,19); also in Luke 24:21. The essential idea in this class of words ("ransom," "redeem,") requires that something analogous to what is due be paid, and something accepted as equivalent in value, but not necessarily the same in kind or in amount. It suffices if it be equivalent in value and be accepted as such.--Of kindred meaning are Christ's words (John 10:15): "I lay down my life for the sheep." This, it will be noticed, is the great idea of vicarious sacrifice, life for life, one life given for another; the sacrifice of one for the salvation of another.

The same idea underlies the institution of the supper which Jesus ordained for a perpetual memorial of the elements most vital in his death: "This is my blood of the New Testament which is shed for many for the remission of sins" (Matt. 20:28). "Remission" is the release, the putting

away, the forgiveness and removal of the curse of violated law. For this end his blood availed; for this it was shed; and this supreme fact pertaining to his death must be held upon the heart of his redeemed church forever! Let it be enshrined in a great memorial service, and a strong, deep impression of it be kept fresh in their souls, all down the ages, from generation to generation, till the end shall come.

(b) The words of John the Baptist are few but weighty. His divine mission being to point out the coming Messiah to his countrymen and indicate his great work, when he saw him approaching, he cried: "Behold the Lamb of God who taketh away the sin of the world!" (John 1:29). "The Lamb," the well known, the long-predicted Lamb, provided and sent of God, looks back to Isaiah's great prophecy (53:7): "He is brought as a lamb to the slaughter," "to bear the sins of many"; and back of this, to the sacrificial offerings of the Mosaic law which pre-indicated the taking away of sin.--Observe, John does not say: Behold the Great Teacher of Israel! nor, Behold the model man whose pure example will regenerate society! nor, Behold the martyr-hero whose testimony for truth and righteousness is to witness sublimely for virtue, and so uphold the law and kingdom of Jehovah; but instead of any or all of these supposable things, he simply said: "Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world"! He may do other things than this, but this is first and chief, paramount, high above all else.

(c) The words of Peter also are few but pregnant with meaning: "Ye know that ye were redeemed with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot" (1 Pet. 1:18,19). "Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sin should live unto righteousness; by whose stripes ye were healed" (1 Pet. 2:24). We note here the same standard words and figures--"redeemed," "with blood," "of a lamb, with out blemish or spot," which are thoroughly Levitical; "the bearing of our sins," and most definitely--not in the sympathy of the heart merely, but "in his own body on the tree [cross]; and finally, that by the stripes upon him there came healing to us--borrowed verbatim from Isa. 53:5.

(d) The staple passages from John are: "The blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth us from all sin" (1 John 1:7); "He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but for the whole world" (1 John 2:2); "He sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins" (1 John 4:10).--Peculiar to John is

the conception of the blood of Christ as "cleansing," washing unto whiteness--the latter appearing twice in his Revelation: "Washed us from our sins in his own blood" "Have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb" (Rev. 1:5 and 7:14).--It is peculiar to John that his mind makes broad, comprehensive generalizations, grasping in one word total results, as here. Moral cleansing holds in itself both the penitence and the pardon--both the turning of the sinner's heart from sin, and the blotting out of all his past transgressions by free and full forgiveness. The work of Christ for his salvation really includes both; and John comprehends both under this conception of making the soul white by washing in the blood of the Lamb. The apparent incongruity of washing unto whiteness in blood only makes the figure more impressive, and serves to show the bearings upon the sinner's salvation sustained in his view of it by the blood of Jesus the Lamb of God.

In John's Revelation we have also the conception of Jesus as "the Lamb," and as "redeeming by his blood." When heaven was opened to his vision, "there stood a Lamb as had been slain," and he heard the new song: "For thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood."--All this shows how thoroughly the sacrificial idea, coming from the Mosaic sacrifices through the prophets, had molded the language and the thought also of this evangelist.

In connection with the other words of John, there comes in appropriately the unconscious prophecy of Caiaphas the high priest (John 11:50-52) which only John has put on record. A debate sprung up in the Jewish council on the political question--what to do with Jesus. Annoyed by his holy teachings, it occurred to them to turn against him the words which had dropped from his lips as to his "kingdom." Could they not bring an indictment against him before the Roman authorities for plotting insurrection? Suddenly the high priest comes to the front: "Ye know nothing at all, nor consider that it is expedient for us that one man should die for the nation and that the whole nation perish not." In these words, his only thought was the wisdom of sacrificing one man's life to save the nation from Roman vengeance. But in the view of John (an inspired man) Caiaphas shaped this speech, not of himself, but all unconsciously, being High Priest, God spake through his official lips, and so his words were a prophecy that Jesus should die for that nation, and not for that nation only, but to gather into one grand church of the redeemed all the

scattered people of God in the Gentile world as well.--To "die for that nation" had a definite sense in the mind of Caiaphas. His words had an analogous sense when taken as an unconscious prophecy of which the Spirit of God was the author. A death in some vital sense vicarious--one man dying that the many might not perish but live--must be its significance. How this death of the one availed to save the many is the great question of the atonement. On one side of the analogy stands the violent death of a supposed traitor; on the other, there is certainly a death by violence, from which there results salvation to myriads. How does that death by violence avail to this wonderful salvation?

(e) The testimony from Paul shows that (in common with his Master) he appreciated the necessity, the need be ("edei") of that suffering death, for he preached to the Jews, "reasoning with them out of their scriptures, opening and alleging that Christ must needs have suffered (Acts 17:3).--Paul also says: "Christ gave himself for us" (Titus 2:14); "Gave himself a ransom for all" (1 Tim. 2:6); that "in him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins," etc., (Eph. 1:7).

But the special additions made by Paul to the Apostolic testimony lie in two passages (2 Cor. 5:21 and Rom. 3:21-26). To the Corinthians he said of Christ: "He (God) hath made him to be sin for us who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him."--Here the chief problem to be settled by the laws of exegesis is, the sense in which God made him (Jesus) to be sin for us.--The laws of exegesis specially applicable here are the known facts of the case; the analogy of kindred passages and the antithesis between his being made sin for us and on being made the righteousness of God in him.--Does the passage mean that God made him to be a sinner for our benefit? That would contradict the known facts of the case, and the whole nature of the case, and is therefore simply insupposable; impossible.--Does it mean, Suffered him to be treated as a sinner; i. e., as put by Peter (Acts 2:23 "delivered him up" in pursuance of his determinate counsel, so that he was seized by wicked Jewish hands, crucified and slain as a vile malefactor? This corresponds to the facts of the case. It also provides for the antithesis between his being made sin and our becoming righteousness; i. e., between his being treated as a sinner and our being treated as righteous before God. He died as if he were a malefactor; we are forgiven and made to stand before God as righteous men against whom "there is now

no more condemnation." This construction is thus sustained by the legitimate rules of interpretation.

But there remains still a further question, viz., whether it is by the wicked Jews, or by God, that he is supposed to be treated as a sinner? Is the thing in mind--the deed of the Jews who slew him, or the deed of God, treating him as a sin-offering for the world?--This brings us to one of the most vital points of the whole subject. In favor of the former alternative it may be said that it corresponds with the thought of Peter quoted above (Acts 2:23), "delivered by God's counsel," but by wicked hands (i. e.) of Jews, crucified; also, that it may (perhaps) exhaust the meaning of the passage. The words in themselves do not seem to demand a reference to God, treating Jesus as a sinner, for the meaning may be satisfied by referring them to the wicked Jews, taking his life.--But on the other hand, the sacrificial language, abounding in both the Old Testament and the New, represents Jesus as bearing the sins of men, as suffering in their stead, and consequently in some sense as a sinner; as being a Lamb of sacrifice, etc., etc.; and this, coupled with all we can learn of Christ's sufferings in his anticipation of death, and in the death itself, seems to favor the view that Jesus was for the time, in some sense, and to a certain extent, treated by the Father as standing in the place of sinners.--To this should be added that the full breadth and force of the antithesis between his being made sin for us and our becoming righteousness through him demand that the former as well as the latter should refer to God. The latter certainly does; it is before God and not before the murderous Jews that we become righteous through Christ; therefore it should be as toward God and not as toward those Jews that Jesus was made sin for us; i.e., was for the moment treated as sin--in the sense, as a sinner.

The other important passage in Paul is Rom. 3:25,26: "Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; to declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus."

The thought here is that sins had been remitted during the ages then past and nothing had been done to set forth God's righteousness in such remission. It was vital to his glory--to the moral support of his throne--that He should show good cause for such remission. Was it morally right for

Him to remit those sins?--It was to meet this question that ("the fullness of time" having come) God set forth his Son Jesus as such a propitiation. It became availing through faith in his blood, and subserved the grand moral purpose of showing that God was entirely just--just to all the vital interests of his kingdom--while yet He justified freely those who believed.-Here is manifestly a play upon the word "just." Through the propitiation [atonement] made by Christ, God can justify believers consistently with justice to his government. He can treat them as if all right, with no infringement upon the rights of his throne. He has so protected these rights that he can safely remit the sins of the penitent believer.--Hence the value of this passage for its bearings upon the aims and results of Christ's atoning work. Until the propitiation made through his blood became known, it would seem that God could not remit sin in justice to his kingdom. After he had set forth this great propitiation before the moral universe, this liability to be thought unjust to his throne was fully obviated.

The point in this passage most disputed is the sense and relations of the word "just." "That God might be just"--in what sense and to what interests?--"Just" (say some) to every sinner, visiting upon him, or upon some substitute, the full and precise penalty of the law. They call this distributive justice."--Say others: just to the interests of his moral kingdom, sacredly shielding them against all the perils incident to pardon. This is called "general justice."-- This latter construction--general justice--has for its support: (a) That this is what God's benevolence demands, and all it demands. (b) That the form of the statement--"that God may be just"--is general, not specific; broad, not restricted; and therefore should be interpreted broadly, not narrowly--as related to the general interests of his kingdom and not to the particular demands of the law on each sinner. (c) The second clause is closely limited; the first might have been, but is not. The second says: justify every believing one; and the first might have said: deal out precise justice to every sinning one--to fall either on himself or his substitute; but it does not say this. I conclude therefore that this strict construction--making the passage mean--just as to every individual sinner--is forced into the passage--not found already in it by fair interpretation.

(f) The testimony from the Epistle to the Hebrews is thoroughly vital to this question. [It has been so fully brought out in the commentary, that only a mere synopsis need be given here.]

The author never forgets that he is writing to men familiar with the Mosaic system, and never fails to avail himself of that system to illustrate the Christian scheme. What the high priest (Aaron) did in symbol, the greater High Priest, Jesus, does in fact. If Aaron went once a year into the Most Holy place to sprinkle the mercy-seat with blood, so does Jesus enter once for all into the heavenly sanctuary with his own blood. Indeed, the earthly sanctuary was constructed precisely from a model of the heavenly, shown to Moses in the Mount. In every part it was framed to illustrate the great things of the upper temple, about the very throne of God. If the blood of bulls and goats below availed to atone for the lesser offenses of ignorance and ceremonial defilement, how much more shall the blood of Jesus, offering himself to God through an eternal Spirit, avail to purge the conscience and restore peace to sin-smitten souls? As under the Mosaic system, all cleansing, all atonement, all acceptance before God, was indicated and fore-shown by the shedding and sprinkling of innocent blood, so under the gospel scheme all atonement and all remission come through the blood of Christ. If this epistle does not teach this, it teaches nothing. Whoever should eliminate this doctrine from the epistle would find nothing left.--We must conclude therefore that the essential features of the atonement were purposely foreshown in the Mosaic system. Any theory of the atonement which ignores the great elements of the sacrificial system and finds in it no analogies to the work of Christ must be fundamentally defective. Precisely what those points of analogy are will be an open question; but palpable analogies there must be. We can by no means meet the demands of the great illustrative system ordained of God through Moses unless we concede that in some way the blood and death of Jesus are fundamental in the atonement.

Taking a general view of this testimony from the New Testament, we note two features standing out most clearly: (a) The same words, the same phrases, the same central ideas, pervade all these writings. No discordant note is heard; no considerable diversity appears. What one says, all are ready to say. One theory of the atonement, and one only, obtains throughout the New Testament. (b) With equal unanimity they take their phraseology and their thought from the Old Testament, i. e., from the Mosaic sacrificial system and from the interpretation put upon that system by the prophets. What is called "the altar-language" rules throughout, first the Old Testament and then the New. An atonement taught outside of this "altar-language," in other phrase, other terms, and

other conceptions than these, it must be exceedingly difficult to make up from the scriptures.

(2) It remains to consider a second body of testimony from Jesus himself, viz., in what he said and manifested in the near anticipation of death and under the suffering itself.

That he had a constant and keen sense of the necessity ("edei") that he should die by violence has been noticed already (as in Luke 24:25-27,44-47). This sense of its certainty and of its vital relations to his great mission appears vividly in his first announcement of the fact to his disciples (Matt. 16:21-23); but especially in his reply to Peter's rebuke. Peter, it is said, "took him, and began to rebuke him, saying, Be it far from thee, Lord: this shall not be unto thee. But he turned, and said unto Peter, Get thee behind me, Satan: thou art an offense unto me: for thou savorest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men." This reply would seem sharp unless it be specially significant--i. e., unless we see underneath it a deep sense that a dread temptation lay in the line of Peter's words, which must not be permitted even to approach his soul. It was (unconsciously to Peter) in harmony with Satan's temptations, and would be an offense [skandalon], a fatal stumbling-block, which must be repelled utterly. That death lay before him as indeed a dread event, yet a death from which it were far more dreadful to shrink.--The same conviction that this death however fearful, must be met and borne, lies in his word (Matt. 26:53) spoken also to Peter: "Put up thy sword: thinkest thou that I can not now pray to my Father, and he shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels? But how then shall the scripture be fulfilled, that thus it must be?" With a full consciousness of having adequate power at command to avert this death, he knew it was fundamental to the redemptive work which his incarnation contemplated, and therefore there could be no evading it; it must be!

Not less clear and strong than this sense of its necessity was his foreknowledge of its dreadful sufferings, and his sense of constraint and straitness until it should be accomplished. "Are ye" (said he to his disciples) "able to drink the cup that I shall drink of, and to be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?" (Matt. 20:22); and in the same line of thought: "I have a baptism to be baptized with, and how am I straitened till it be accomplished!" (Luke 12:50). The fearful strain was upon his soul; the dread anticipation pressed him sore. How could he

wait for the hour to come and be past!--We must accept these utterances as deeply significant of the large place which that fearful death held in his anticipations. Was there not far more in that death than the physical pains of crucifixion?--By the side of these utterances, place those of Paul: "I am in a strait"--the same word which Christ used; [sunekomai]--"betwixt two, having a desire to depart and to be with Christ, which is far better; but to abide in the flesh is more needful for you" (Phil. 1:23,24). We notice, however, that Paul's sense of straitness was by no means a dread of painful death--although he too had (probably) a death on the cross before him; yet of that he only said calmly: "I am ready to be offered." Why should the calm composure of Paul, in view of the cross, be so unlike the straitness and the agony that lay so heavily upon the soul of his Master?

A special element of this death-scene is indicated in Christ's words (Luke 22:53): "This is your hour and the power of darkness." Your moment of advantage and apparent victory over me has come; the powers of hell are out upon me in their strength and madness; the hot and dreadful conflict is at hand!

Proceeding to yet other words of bitter anticipation, we read (John 12:27): "Now is my soul troubled" (this word in the sense of agitated, deeply anxious, pressed with burdens almost insupportable), "and what shall I say? Shall I say, Father, save me from this hour? Nay, because for this very purpose came I unto this hour. Rather let me say, Father, glorify thy name."--Of entirely kindred character to this were his struggle and passion in Gethsemane. Nearer and still nearer the final hour draws on; Judas will soon be there with his posse; there is but a step to the arrest, and then the mock trial, and the death scene!--Here his words and manifestations are fearfully expressive: "He began to be sorrowful and very heavy" ["began" may perhaps indicate a new experience, and if new, then human, not divine]. He said: "My soul is exceeding sorrowful even unto death; tarry ye here and watch with me." "He fell on his face and prayed, O, my Father! if it be possible, let this cup pass from me;" and a second time: "O, my Father! if this cup may not pass from me, except I drink it, thy will be done!" (Matt. 26:36-42).--To this scene we must refer the allusion (Heb. 5:7): "When he had offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto him that was able to save him from death."--Luke adds two other facts, viz., that under his great

agony "his sweat was as it were great drops of blood, falling to the ground," and that "an angel came from heaven to strengthen him."

We will not forget that scenes of great and crushing grief are sacred; therefore our questionings into the causes and elements of this great sorrow should be reverent. Yet we have a momentous interest in the inquiry, and it can not be obtrusive if we ask humbly, what did that fearful agony indicate? How can it be accounted for? Was there not something in it far more deep and dreadful than the mere pains of the cross near at hand? Did the "cup" which he prayed might pass from him contain only the tortures of torn flesh and lingering death--these precisely and nothing more? His prayer to one able to save him from death was in some vital sense heard, yet the agonies of crucifixion were borne to the bitter end.--Moreover, other martyrs have faced the cruel cross and the tortures of death by fire, with no such dread agony of anticipation, and no such impassioned cry that the cup might pass.--We are pressed therefore still to ask again, must we not assume both the anticipation and the presence of some great agony of soul, compared with which the pains of crucifixion are not to be named?

One outcry from the cross carries with it a dread significance, especially as coming from the lips of one who, up to this awful hour, seems never to have suffered the slightest interruption of his communion with the Father. Yet here he cried: "My God! my God! why hast thou forsaken me?--Shall we allow our prejudgments to question the fitness of these words? Shall we labor to break their force by our assumptions as to the paternal relations and feelings of the Father toward his Son? By what right shall we wrest out of them their legitimate sense? How shall we dare assume that they have no deep and pertinent meaning? Instead of forcing them to conform themselves to our theories of Christ's atoning death, is it not rather incumbent on us to accept them as one of the great facts of that death, and shape our theories so as at least not to come in conflict with their unquestionable significance? What are theories of the atonement good for save as they adjust themselves to all the known facts?

The supernatural darkness during the three hours of his agony on the cross stands as an historic fact, with no explanatory word to indicate its purpose or its effect upon the Great Sufferer. Did it signify and suggest the hiding of his Father's face? Did it bring a deeper gloom over his own soul?--Or was it only a recoil of nature, as if for the moment morally

conscious and horrified at such human guilt? Shall we clue it with the earthquake and the rending of the rocks asunder, or, on the other hand, with the cry, "Why hast thou forsake me?"--I doubt if we have the data for its certain interpretation.

A comprehensive view of the testimony found in the recorded words and acts of Jesus relating to his death must impress the conviction that no other such death stands on the page of human history, it is remarkable that so many words respecting it, and words so expressive, are on record, it is wonderful that this death should have held so large a place in his thought and so deep a place in his heart.--Luke (and he only) has given this as the subject of the conversation held with Moses and Elias on the mount of transfiguration. "They spake of his decease ("exodus") which he should fulfill ("pleroun") at Jerusalem"--a pregnant sense lying under this word fulfill. That death was full of peculiar, momentous significance. All heaven (may we not say?) was looking toward it with thrilling emotion!

Certainly this death was fraught with elements and results of unsurpassed significance. It was more than a martyr's death--far more and other than the dying of even the Prince of Christian martyrs.--It fell to Stephen and to Paul to die a martyr's death; but they met it with no recoil of dread anticipation; with no imploring prayer that "the cup might pass;" with no impassioned cry: "Why hast thou forsaken me?"--if the death of Jesus had no other purpose and no deeper significance than that of a Christian martyr, to be the supreme example of Christian heroism, and of sustaining grace in such an hour, why was not his soul flooded with the light of God, lifted above the sense of physical torture, exultant in the visible glories of the open heavens?

This outline of Scripture testimony we may now apply to the several theories of the atonement above named.

I. That which finds the central idea of the atonement in its manifestation of God's sympathy with our sinning, suffering race. Under this theory Jesus bore our griefs and sorrows in the sense of taking them upon his heart in sympathy and pitying love. He became incarnate that he might the more surely feel and the more clearly manifest this loving sympathy. In these manifestations lies the great moral power of the atonement, for by these are human hearts broken down in penitence, and thus lifted up

into a morally transforming faith in God.

Under this theory atonement is simply and only at-one-ment, the reconciliation of the sinner to God; not at all, the propitiation of God by removing the obstacles lying in a broken law, and in the impugned authority of the lawgiver. It holds that the atonement looks not at all beyond the moral recovery of the sinner; that God's law has no penalty for sin except the natural consequences of that sin upon the sinner; that these are of course removed when he repents and in so far as he becomes holy; that consequently, God has no occasion to protect the honor of his law by an atonement (in the usual sense of this word) as a condition precedent to safe pardon.

The one comprehensive objection to this theory is, that it lacks bottom. Its fundamental assumptions are fallacious. The Scriptures everywhere assume (all reason concurring therein) that God governs moral agents under a law which is enforced by positive penalties of his own infliction. Hence "condemnation" and "forgiveness" are not empty words but solemn realities. Consequently forgiveness must have another antecedent condition besides repentance, viz., some provision to sustain the honor and moral force of the law which sin has broken.

Any theory of the atonement which forgets that sin is transgression of God's law; that law has penalties which transgression incurs, and that incurred penalty can not be ignored on God's part without damage, dishonor, and even moral ruin to his government--must be superficial and fallacious, simply because it does not recognize the vital facts of the case. This, therefore, is my first objection (fatal, of course) to the theory of atonement which makes sympathy its central element. This alone should suffice to refute it.

Yet it may not be amiss to show that in many points it conflicts fatally with the testimony of scripture as to the atonement--e. g.:

(1) In that it makes void the entire sacrificial system. It finds in that system no illustrative, typical character. In fact there is nothing there which even suggests sympathy. What sympathy with human suffering can there be in killing innocent animals, in holding up before God in worship the tortures, the death-agonies, the sprinkled blood, of bullocks and lambs? Whose sympathy do such sacrifices illustrate? Not those of the offerer, nor of the priest, nor of God. In no point of view does it seem

less than absurd to look for the least typical exhibition of sympathy in animal sacrifices.--Thus this theory contravenes the testimony of scripture inasmuch as it nullifies at one stroke all the significance of the sacrificial system; and, be it noticed, all the significance, therefore, of "the altar-language"--the sacrificial terms and phrases which, throughout the Old Testament and the New, describe to us the redemptive work of Christ in his sufferings and death.--(2) Worse still, this theory, as applied to the sacrificial system, not merely lacks adaptation; is not merely negative in that it fails to meet the demands of that system; but it contravenes it; runs counter to it; has not a feature in harmony with it. For, sympathy is in its nature gentle, mild, tender, loving. If you propose to illustrate it typically, the spirit of your types should whisper gently and breathe tenderly. But the spirit and tone of death-sacrifice is stern and awful. The shedding of innocent blood suggests penalty, indignation, displeasure against sin. It witnesses to human guilt; and has no voice, no word that looks toward the tenderness of sympathy with suffering. Scenes of blood and torture may, under some circumstances, be morally wholesome, as when outraged justice cries for retribution. But such scenes are no manifestation of sympathy with the guilty; their tone and spirit are of entirely another character. Therefore I maintain that the theory which finds the whole spirit and the essential significance of the atonement in God's sympathy with sinners runs counter to the spirit of the sacrificial system. It would demand a totally different style of symbolical representation; it stands in fatal antagonism to this.--(3) Every theory of the atonement should justify itself by meeting in a satisfactory way all the material facts of the case. The most material, vital facts of this case are the dreadful sufferings of Gethsemane and Calvary--sufferings, be it considered, whose severest element was not physical torture, but mental anguish. What was this mental anguish? On the theory now in question, it was the feeling of sympathy with sinners. But such sympathy is benevolence; in a spotless soul, pure, perfect benevolence, and therefore can not, in its ultimate outcome, be agonizing. Is it then even supposable that Jesus recoiled and shrunk back from bearing the burdens of benevolent sympathy with suffering sinners? Was the "cup," which he so impassionately besought the Father to let pass from him, filled with nothing more dreadful than sympathy with sinners? What reason can be given why a benevolent soul should shrink in awful agony from drinking such a cup? What should we think of an angel, or even of a Christian brother or sister, who should manifest such shrinking and recoil from

bearing the heart-burdens of sympathy with suffering sinners?--So far as we can see, if this sympathy with sinners, in view of their sufferings, was really the "cup" of the Savior's woe, it shocks our moral sentiments to think that he recoiled from it with strong crying and tears, and implored that it might pass from him and he not drink it!-- Yet again: How can we account for the outcry: "My God! my God! why hast thou forsaken me?" Was this a mere hallucination? Is it conceivable that Jesus could so strangely misapprehend the moral attitude of the Father toward him? How could he suppose the Father to be so displeased with his sympathy for sinners as to forsake him in the dread hour of dying in their behalf?

In fine, the following objections to this theory are insuperable: (1) It utterly ignores the testimony of the Mosaic sacrificial system, and of the "altar-language," under which the atonement is taught by prophets, evangelists and by Jesus Christ himself.--(2) It contravenes all that testimony; breathes a totally different spirit; demands a fundamentally opposite body of illustrative types and symbols; and bears no other relation to the Mosaic system and to the language and figures built upon it than that of irreconcilable antagonism.--(3) As a theory which proposes to explain the mystery of Christ's utterances and agonies in the garden and on the cross, it not only explains nothing, but its results are unutterably revolting and logically impossible.--(4) The strain of argument by which this theory has been advocated is logically fallacious and morally revolting in this one leading feature, viz., that it exalts all the self-sacrificing labors amid sufferings of good beings into "vicarious sacrifice," and thus tones down and disparages the "vicarious sacrifice" of Christ as in fact nothing special, nothing in anywise peculiar, nothing of consequence beyond what all kind mothers do for their sick children, and all good people for their suffering neighbors. The reader will notice that the Scriptures never illustrate the "vicarious sacrifice" of Christ by such analogies--never put it on the same plane as to its nature with the self-sacrifices made by good men and women for the suffering classes.

II. The second theory regards the sufferings and death of Christ as strictly and precisely substitutional--an exact substitute, on the principle of distributive justice, for all that the redeemed must else have suffered, he having endured the very penalty of the law they had broken. The standard phrase which defines this theory is: "Christ suffered the penalty of the law for sinners," and not merely a substitute for that penalty.

My quotations setting forth this theory will be from standard authors, living or recent. In such authorities I read: "The precise thing Christ did was to suffer the penalty of the law as the substitute of his people. His direct intention was to satisfy justice in their behalf, and thus secure, on legal terms, their salvation" (Prof. A. A. Hodge, *Atonement*, pp. 27,28). "God's immutable nature demands the punishment of sin; and therefore Christ, when made to occupy the place of sinners, suffered that punishment" (Ib. p. 44). Atonement is the "satisfaction which Christ rendered to the justice of God in vicariously bearing the penalty due to our sins" (Ib. p. 34).--Another author, thus: "The only possible way whereby a transgressor can escape the penalty of the law is for a substitute to endure it for him" (Prof. Shedd in "*Bib. Sacra.*," October, 1859, p. 740).-- "God is so strictly and immutably just that he would not spare his beloved Son when he took upon him the guilt of man's sin and was substituted in the room of sinners. He would not abate him the least mite of that debt which justice demanded" (quoted from Edwards' works, vol. 4, p. 146).

In examining this theory it is well to consider, in the outset, that its standard phrase--"The penalty of the law which sinners have broken,"--is very definite. Penalty is synonymous with threatened suffering. Sufferings of some sort make up all there is in penalty. It could be no penalty without suffering; it is suffering only, unmixed with good. And to say, "The penalty affixed to the law sin has broken," makes it as definite as it can be put in our English tongue. --Now if we ask, What are the elements of suffering which constitute this penalty, there will be a general if not universal agreement in these points: Banishment from God; all manifestations of his favor withheld; a conscious sense of his infinite displeasure; such inflictions of suffering as will manifest to the universe his abhorrence of sin--all this to be eternal. Of what sort the inflicted suffering will be; whether at all physical, and if so what, it is not essential here to know. It is however quite safe to say that the sinner's doom in the awful future, if physical, will not be everlasting crucifixion.--Nor need we debate the question whether the sinner's remorse of conscience should be counted as a part of God's inflictions, or as a necessary result of the sinner's moral nature. We must at least admit that the agonies of remorse come indirectly from God as the author of man's moral constitution: and that he may quicken them to fearful intensity by his providential agencies.

Now these elements which come within "the penalty of the law," show what Christ must needs have suffered if in fact he bore that whole penalty.

Did he suffer all that penalty? We recoil from the supposition. We know he was not banished from God; was not made to feel an abiding sense of his wrath; was not tortured by remorse. It contravenes our most reliable conceptions of God to suppose that he intended by inflicted suffering to manifest before the universe displeasure toward his Son. Nobody can think that Christ's sufferings were, as the sinner's would have been, eternal. It is therefore certain that Christ did not (in the only just sense of the phrase) suffer the penalty of the law. That they should have been the same in kind is utterly insupposable.

Moreover, that his sufferings were equivalent in amount as suffering to all that the redeemed must else have suffered, is possible only on the supposition that his divine nature suffered. But to the supposition that his divine nature suffered directly (i. e., otherwise than through sympathy with the humanity there are exceedingly strong objections. To the theory that his divine sufferings were infinite, the objections are insuperable.-- Thus, against the theory that the divine nature suffered, lie (1) the historic facts, which indicate to us what those sufferings were --such as these: The pains of crucifixion and death were human, not divine; to suffer acutely from the near anticipation of suffering (as in Gethsemane) is human, not divine; to suffer under the assaults of Satan is human, not divine; to "learn obedience by the things he suffered" is certainly human, not divine; to pray that, if possible, the cup might pass from him is human, not divine; to have temporarily a sense of being forsaken by God, as that outcry on the cross seems to indicate that he had, is human, not divine. Thus every known element of his sufferings, so far as revealed in the history, is thoroughly human, and not at all, in any direct sense, divine.

(2) The agonies of Gethsemane were of mind, not of body. So far as appears, they were peculiar to that hour; he then "began to be sorrowful"; these sorrows had not lain upon his soul for months and years preceding as they came upon him then. This fact seems to justify the inference that the thoughts and mental states of that hour which brought on him those agonies were of the human nature, not of the divine. For in Christ's divine mind there could have been no new peculiar views at that particular time.

To his divine mind all things must appear forever in their true nature, relations and results. Therefore those thoughts and views in which lay the agony of that hour (if they were those of his divine mind) must have been from all eternity the same as then. But this conflicts with the facts of the case, and therefore seems to show that those agonies were not of his divine thought but of his human.

Against the theory that by means of Christ's suffering in his divine nature, those sufferings became infinite in amount and so a full equivalent (considered simply as suffering) to all which the redeemed must else have suffered, lie these insuperable objections:

1. Benevolence gains nothing by it. The universal good of being is not promoted thereby; therefore the love of God could never give birth to such a scheme.
2. Its results would be on the whole more evil than good, and therefore benevolence must forbid such a sacrifice. For if the sufferings are to be the same in amount, it is better the guilty should bear them than the innocent in their stead.
3. If it be said that justice in God is an attribute distinct from benevolence and of a higher, nobler, more imperative nature, overruling benevolence, the proper answer is a square denial. That justice in God should be supposed to override, rule out, and sacrifice the highest good of universal being, and do what love could not do but must condemn, is simply impossible; would be unendurably revolting to reason, and not less repugnant to scripture than to reason, for scripture declares unqualifiedly that God is love, but never that God is justice in any such sense as overrules love.

These considerations and reasonings bring us to the conclusion that Christ did not, in any proper sense, suffer the penalty of the law. His sufferings were neither the same in kind nor equal in amount to the sum total which all the redeemed must else have suffered.

It would be turning aside unprofitably from this course of argument to quote from those who insist that Christ suffered the penalty of the law, and show that having made this the test and standard of orthodoxy, many if not most of them then proceed to explain it almost utterly away, and to say (e. g.) on one page: "God demanded from Christ the very same

punishment as to kind of punishment, though not as to the degree or as to the nature of the suffering, which the law denounced upon us"; and on another, (two pages after): "We say that Christ suffered the very penalty of the law, not because he suffered in the least the same kind, much less the same degree of suffering as was penally due those for whom he acted" (Prof. A. A. Hodge, pp. 36,38). This certainly appears to be a case of holding on tenaciously to the words of a favorite definition while rejecting the legitimate sense of it. The latter is a concession to truth and evidence; the former is not so easily explained. However, it is in most respects gratifying to find that those who begin with the definition: "Christ suffered the very penalty of the law for sinners," proceed to modify it by eliminating its essential ideas, toning it down usually to this general and unobjectionable statement: Christ suffered in behalf of sinners all that God's justice and holiness demanded for the ends of an adequate atonement.

This theory must be rejected, not because (like that previously considered) it signifies too little to fulfill the scriptural testimony, but because it signifies too much. In respect to both the nature and amount of Christ's sufferings, it demands more than the historic record requires or admits; and more than the nature of the case demands or even allows.

If it be said that the altar-language, e. g., "bearing our sins"; "gave himself a ransom for all"; "made a curse for us," etc., admits this theory, and naturally expresses it, I answer: Even if that be granted, it does not demand it. Another view, exempt from the insuperable difficulties of this, suffices to fill out the necessary and indeed the natural sense of this altar-language, and should, therefore, be accepted. --There is not the least occasion to press this altar-language to signify that Christ suffered the same in kind and amount as the redeemed must else have suffered; or that his death was the same thing as the sinner's eternal death would else have been; for a less suffering might suffice and a very different death might avail. An analogy doubtless exists between what Christ suffered and what is due to the sinner; but analogies call only for certain resemblances and not for identities. This is the point where this theory makes its capital mistake. It pushes these analogies unreasonably far. It puts into them more than the terms and figures demand, and more than the nature of the case can possibly admit.

Special notice should be taken of Gal. 3:13 much relied on as proof that

Christ suffered the whole curse of the law for us. Here Paul says: "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us, for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree." But observe that this passage, for the purposes of the theory under consideration, is made to read virtually thus: Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made to suffer the curse of the law for us. This is a large interpolation. Very important words are put into the passage, in addition to what Paul put in, which therefore are not there by his authority. This adding to words inspired of God is by no means admissible unless it appears from the context or from other legitimate authority that Paul must have meant what these added words express. But Paul's context shows that he is thinking, not of Christ's being made the very curse of the law which sinners had broken, but only of his being accounted--considered to be--accursed in the sense in which any and every man hung on a tree was in Jewish sentiment held to be accursed; for in support of his view he quotes Deut. 21:23, which is a special statute against leaving the malefactor's body on the tree over night. Paul's meaning therefore is that suspending Christ on the tree was in the popular view an extreme reproach because it was supposed to imply the execration of God. But this is a very different thing from Christ's suffering the eternal death to which the law doomed every transgressor.

As commonly held, this theory of the work of Christ for sinners is in two quite distinct parts, viz.: (1) Christ bearing for sinners the full penalty of the law. (2) His perfect obedience to the law, which, upon the condition of faith, is imputed, i. e., transferred in law to the believer and accounted as his own.--On this theory it would seem that the sinner is justified twice; in each case on entirely distinct and independent grounds; viz., first, because Christ has suffered the full penalty of the law in his stead, so that nothing in law stands against him; second, because Christ has obeyed the law perfectly for him, and this is accounted to be his own obedience, as if he had rendered it himself. Of course, on either of these grounds it would seem he should be fully justified.

This theory is obnoxious to the following insuperable objections:

1. Obedience and disobedience are, in their essential nature, personal and non-transferable. Every moral agent must obey or disobey on his own sole responsibility. The law says to him, do this, do not that, and holds him to his own duty. No law binding on me permits another moral

agent to do my duty for me, and then reckons his act as being really my act, and so releases me from my personal responsibility. Neither can it permit another moral agent to disobey for me, and then account his disobedience as mine. The supposition of a transfer from one moral being to another, of personal obligation and of consequent merit or demerit, is simply absurd. Law knows nothing of the sort.

2. If there be two distinct provisions for justification, each in itself all-sufficient, then one or the other must be superfluous. If either is a fact, it supersedes the other. There is not the least occasion for the sinner to be justified twice over; i. e., on two entirely distinct and independent grounds. No such superfluous provision can be consistent with God's wisdom.

3. This supposed transfer of Christ's righteousness to the believer is not the scriptural doctrine of mercy and forgiveness; nor is it taught in the scriptures by any right interpretation of their words. The sense of it is not there. For, according to the Scriptures, sinners become right before God (1) by their repentance; (2) by their faith in Christ--upon the basis of which faith their sins are, through Christ's atonement, forgiven. Once renewed in heart and forgiven of their sin, they are accepted before God. Nothing more can possibly be requisite.

4. If Christ's righteousness were really transferred to the believer, there would be no more room for the exercise of mercy in his forgiveness, since he would be righteous even as Christ himself is. Nor does it appear, how he could need grace for future holy living, having the perfect holiness of Jesus Christ for his own.

5. In its practical bearings, this doctrine tends dangerously to antinomianism, inasmuch as, if really believed, it naturally quenches the sense of personal responsibility for obedience; supersedes watchfulness, prayer and perpetual endeavor to do all the will of God. For why should not the believer say in his heart, This imputed righteousness of Christ is all I need to make me right before God? It is infinitely better than any obedience of my own, and it really makes mine of the least possible consequence. Why should I concern myself over my own doings, as if they had any bearing upon my standing before God, or as if He would ever look at them?

Does any sensible man receive such impressions from the thoughtful,

prayerful reading of the Scriptures?

III. The third theory holds that Christ's sufferings and death were in fact vicarious, inasmuch as they obviate the necessity for the eternal death of sinners, become penitent and believing, and so take the place of such death.

Negatively, this theory does not hold Christ's sufferings to have been penal in the sense of punishment for sin; and by no means supposes them to have been the same in kind or equal in amount to all which the redeemed must else have suffered.

Positively, on this theory, Christ's sufferings and death, on the one hand, honored the divine law by forcibly suggesting and endorsing its righteous penalty; and, on the other, by signally illustrating the spirit of self-sacrificing obedience; in both directions giving the law such moral support as made it safe and wise to pardon the penitent and believing, and to give the Holy Sufferer myriads of redeemed souls as his reward.

This theory will justify itself as true if it shall appear:

1. That it is in harmony with the revealed facts of the history of Christ's sufferings.
2. That it meets the demands of the "altar-language," i. e., the fair significance of the Mosaic sacrificial system, the legitimate sense of its analogies and of the terms and phrases drawn from them and used by prophets, apostles and our Lord himself.
3. That it meets the exigencies of God's moral government by adequately suggesting and sustaining its righteous penalties; by signally honoring Christ's spirit of self-sacrificing obedience; and also by evolving the highest conceivable moral power unto the repentance of sinners and unto their subsequent new life of love to Christ.

1. It harmonizes with the historic facts as shown in the scriptures.

Here the important points are--that Christ's sufferings were apparently (as already shown) those of his human nature only; that his physical sufferings were the utmost that human flesh could endure, so that he truly died of suffering--his mortal life went out in and by means of torture; that his mental sufferings were not less extreme, involving the severest

trial to his feelings under his treatment from his professed friends--betrayed by one; denied by another; bereft of the much desired sympathy and sustaining prayer of his most trusted and beloved three; at the point of his arrest, forsaken by all.--Coupled with this were the cruelest abuse and scorn from those he was dying to save. To all this we must add an almost crushing sense of the magnitude of the interests pending upon steadfast endurance to the end and upon holding his heart true to God, true to his momentous mission, patient under extremest trial, and suffering, sweetly obedient, loving, forgiving.--So far as we can judge the sorest element in his cup of woe was the conscious sense of being forsaken of God, left without those spiritual consolations which had never failed him before, left in this most trying hour alone to put his virtue and obedience to the sternest possible test.--Thus this theory accounts for the emphasis every-where laid upon his suffering as immense; upon his sacrifice as being inconceivably great, and upon his sense of the stern and fearful necessity for such a death, and the consequent straitness, recoil, and the almost insurmountable burdens of soul, borne in the dread anticipation apparent in Gethsemane.

2. This theory meets adequately the demands of the "altar-language" which has grown out of the ancient sacrificial system, and which appears in the prophets and throughout the New Testament.--For here, as there, are blood and death, together signifying an atonement which both prepares the way for pardon and carries in itself most potent agencies for moral cleansing. Here is death, analogous to the death of the animal victims under the sacrificial system and suggesting (as did their death) the deserved death of the sinners whom Jesus died to save. This blood and this death are no less prominent under this theory than in that foreshadowing typical system; no less powerfully suggestive on the one hand of righteous penalty, and on the other of the divine love manifested by the Father in sparing not his own well-beloved Son, and by the Son in bearing such a death for the souls of men.-- Here was "vicarious sacrifice" or "the just for the unjust," to bring us near to God. Here was "propitiation" as toward God, since such a death for sinners made it safe and honourable for Him, on this basis, to forgive the penitent. Here also was what availed to reconcile the sinner to God, because such manifestations of divine love and sacrifice in his behalf brought the mightiest moral power upon him to break his heart in contrition and to inspire hope of mercy --evolving thus the very agencies best adapted to

secure repentance and a holy life.--Here was blood shed for the remission of sin, bearing which (after the manner of the ancient high priests) Jesus, our Great High Priest, entered once for all into the heavenly sanctuary to mediate and intercede to the end of time for his redeemed.

Moreover, the case did not require that the Father should with his own hand slay the Lamb of sacrifice. It sufficed that He should "deliver him up to be taken by wicked hands and crucified." Nor yet was it required that the Father should manifest wrath against the Great Sufferer, or even, in any proper sense, displeasure against him, since it sufficed that He should leave the Son without the usual consolations of his manifested presence to the end that his virtue and obedience unto death might be put to the severest strain, the sacrifice be thus made more precious, the meritorious obedience more sublime and more worthy of infinite reward. Nor let it be thought incredible that suffering should come permissively from God upon the good in this world and yet not signify displeasure toward the sufferer. The great sufferings of Job came upon him, not because he was worse than other men, but because he was better--a man of model, most exemplary piety. The Lord had uses for suffering in his case--uses among which the showing of displeasure was not one. Often among his earthly saints it is whom he loves that he afflicts. It is rare that human thought fathoms to the bottom this great problem--the uses of suffering from the hand of God upon the good.

Further, his death by wicked hands not only made an awful manifestation of human depravity before the universe, but gave that death the greater morally suggestive power to every sinner through all time, since it reminds him forcibly that sin crucified the Son of God--my own sin virtually, scarcely less than that of proud and hardened scribe and Pharisee. If they disowned and dishonored the Son of God, so in heart have I! In the spirit of the deed, my proud soul, no less than theirs, stands guilty before God of his murder!

Thus in various and quite diverse lines of influence did the death of Christ work toward the great moral purposes of the atonement. This setting forth before the universe the appalling guilt of sin as shown in the murder of the Son of God evolved a mighty moral power. It is brought home upon guilty souls to their personal conviction, inasmuch as the manner of his death suggests that every sinner who sets Christ at nought virtually

"crucifies him afresh and puts him to an open shame."--These moral influences work in other lines than the strictly penal. Nothing impresses one who studies deeply this great scheme of redemption more than its marvelous economy of moral forces; the glorious depths of the riches both of the wisdom and the love of God! How unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!

3. Under this theory, the atonement meets the exigencies of God's moral government. For,

(1) It brings infinite honor to the injured law by forcibly suggesting and fully sustaining its righteous penalty--a sacrifice no less than the life and blood of the incarnate Son being the price paid for the sinner's ransom. What could set forth more perfectly God's infinite regard for his law? Who thenceforth could doubt that the Great Lawgiver held his law sacred, and would sustain its dignity, authority, and honor, to the uttermost?

(2) It bore the testimony of divine approval to Christ's spirit of sublime obedience unto death. Think of the honor God was thus enabled to put upon self-sacrificing benevolence! What a revelation of God's glorious character shone out in this whole scheme! Especially it evinced God's supreme regard to his great law of love, and lent such moral force to its support as availed to make it safe to pardon the penitent. It availed also in an adequate reason before the moral universe for rewarding Christ's obedience and self-sacrifice with the gift of myriads of human souls redeemed and saved to his glory.

(3) On this theory the atonement manifested the love of God in forms at once sublimely grand, and fraught with highest moral power unto holiness, both upon our fallen world and upon all the hierarchies of heaven. The simple story--that "God so loved the world that he gave his only-begotten Son," and that this Son so loved the world that he shrunk not from severest torture and a most terrible death, can never lose its power to thrill the moral universe and witness to the fathomless depths of God's infinite love.

(4) The scheme commends itself as divinely wise in that it works both towards the moral transformation of the sinner and also towards and unto the eternal honor of God's law and throne.

Wisdom and love are both made to shine forth in glorious fullness and

splendor in the wonderful adjustment of means to ends, and in the marvelous economy of forces whereby sufferings really finite avail to results of good that are truly infinite. It is by no means an offset of one evil against another equivalent evil--so much suffering borne, to be set against an equal amount of suffering saved. This would have been no ground for admiration to the wise, or for joy to the benevolent. But here are the sufferings of Christ's human nature (finite, of course) made infinitely potent for all the purposes of atonement by his real divinity and sonship to the Father. It was every thing to the moral value of those sufferings that, though endured in his human flesh and human soul, they were lifted to the sphere of infinite dignity and worth by his mysterious union with divinity and by his relation to God as his only Father.-- Moreover, this divinity brought to those sufferings and to that death not only infinite dignity but also infinite power. They came thereby to represent an infinite weight of character--the very moral force that evermore sustains law, commands the respect and homage of intelligent moral beings, and exalts to highest honor and authority the throne of the infinite God. Such a scheme--at once an infinite gain to the universe of sentient beings on the score of suffering, and an infinite accession of moral power unto holiness, must be a fountain of inexhaustible satisfaction to God's benevolence, and of similar joy to all his benevolent children. All the great interests of God's universal kingdom perfectly and even gloriously subserved; his personal character as one supremely devoted to the highest good of his moral creatures sublimely manifested; new moral forces of untold value brought into action. As these grand revelations are unrolled onward and still onward eternally, in the view of those "morning stars" that "sang together" over our newborn earth and of all their younger and yet unborn brethren, how will the anthem of grateful and adoring praises swell out upon the great expanse of all intelligent worlds in honor of this wonderful redemption!